

CLERK OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
WORCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
20 IRVING STREET  
WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS 01609

AGENDA #13

on: Thursday, March 30, 2020  
at: 6:00 p.m. – Executive Session  
7:00 p.m. – Regular Session  
in: Esther Howland South Chamber, City Hall

ORDER OF BUSINESS

ACTION

- I. CALL TO ORDER
  - INVOCATION
  - PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
  - NATIONAL ANTHEM
- II. ROLL CALL
- III. APPROVAL OF RECORDS
- IV. MOTION FOR RECONSIDERATION – NONE
- V. IMMEDIATE ACTION
- VII. COMMUNICATIONS AND PETITIONS - NONE
- VIII. REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE - NONE
- IX. PERSONNEL -NONE
- VI. REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT
  - ros #0-4 - Administration  
(March 10, 2020)
  - STUDENT OPPORTUNITY ACT'S PLAN
- X. GENERAL BUSINESS
- XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION - NONE



## **Worcester Public Schools Student Opportunity Act Plan DRAFT**

### **Commitment 1: Focusing on Student Subgroups**

**Which student subgroups will require focused support to ensure all students achieve at high levels in school and are successfully prepared for life?**

As an urban Gateway district, Worcester Public Schools (WPS) is the second largest and one of the most diverse school districts in the Commonwealth. The WPS has approximately 25,000 students. Our current student population is 43% Hispanic/Latino, 29% White, 17% African American, 6% Asian, and 4% multi-race/non-Hispanic. Our Hispanic/Latino and African American student subgroups have been steadily increasing over the last five years. Additionally, 80% of our students are identified as “high needs” with 32% identified as English Learners (EL), 21% as Students with Disabilities (SWD), and 60% as Economically Disadvantaged. While our student body is quite diverse, our current WPS staff is over 80% White.

District data over the last five years shows that there have been areas of improvement but gaps are persistent. Specifically, gaps between our ELs and SWDs and their counterparts continue to exist. Recent MCAS performance across grades 3-8 indicates that less than 10% of ELs and SWDs, and only 25% of Hispanic/Latino students meet or exceed expectations. These groups consistently perform below district-wide averages. Similar trends and gaps exist in high school MCAS performance. Overall, WPS MCAS performance shows minimal gains over the past several years.

Additionally, performance and participation of ELs, SWDs, and Hispanic/Latino students appears across multiple indicators beyond standardized testing. These gaps are evident as early as pre-school. Overall classroom performance, participation and achievement in Advanced Placement and other advanced coursework, college enrollment and persistence and other indicators all show significant gaps for ELs, SWDs and Hispanic/Latino students.

In order to ensure all students achieve at high levels and are successfully prepared for life, the student subgroups in WPS that require focused support are ELs, SWDs and Hispanic/Latino students.

## **Commitment 2: Using Evidence-Based Programs to Close Gaps**

**What evidence-based programs will your district adopt, deepen, or continue to best support the closure of achievement and opportunity gaps? What resources will you allocate to these programs?**

The following evidence-based programs will be adopted, deepened or continued in order to close the achievement and opportunity gaps in WPS:

- Increase early learning opportunities for students by enhancing literacy practices in early grades and expanding full-day Pre-K programming
- Increase college and career attainment for students by expanding Early College and Innovation Pathways programs
- Improve the learning experiences of students by deepening attention to issues of diversity, inclusion and equity through diversifying the workforce and deepening staff understanding of culturally responsive practices
- Increase students' pro-social behavior and decision-making skills by increasing personnel and expanding and strengthening SEL instruction

**Evidence-based Program #1: Increase early literacy opportunities for students by expanding full-day Pre-K programming and enhance literacy practices in the early grades**

**Students Impacted:** The Worcester Public Schools plans to significantly expand early literacy programming, interventions and supports over the next three years. A variety of classroom and support positions to expand pre-kindergarten programming will be added. In Year 1, 520 students will be impacted (SY 21), in Year 2, 710 students will be impacted (SY 22) and in Year 3, 785 students will be impacted (SY 23) directly by the proposed early literacy expansion. Overall, approximately 7,000 WPS students in grades PreK-3 will benefit from the enhanced literacy practices in the early grades in each year of implementation.

**Description of why and proposed plan:** Expanding Early Childhood programming will benefit learners and support educators to create a district-wide, coherent and comprehensive early literacy plan and to ensure that all students are reading on or above grade level by grade 3. The WPS aims to expand research-based early literacy programming in order to meet multiple needs: increase access to early childhood education; provide specific and tiered intervention to support early learners and provide a continuum of choices for early education models. By providing a variety of options, we aim to provide high quality learning experiences for all learners and increase student achievement by addressing early gaps that exist.

### **Enhancing Literacy Practices**

The WPS will expand upon current efforts to build the literacy knowledge and instructional capacity of all PreK-3 teachers.

**Professional learning in Year 1, 2 and 3 will increase Early Educators' literacy knowledge relative to:**

- reading, writing and language development
- acceleration of ELs' English acquisition through developing vocabulary, building oral language and shared literacy practices
- bilingualism and biliteracy development and the ways in which literacy learning transfers across languages
- culturally relevant pedagogy
- efficient systems for assessment and documentation of students' progress
- integrated phonics and word study
- effective intervention design for tiered instruction to meet the needs of a variety of learners including SWD

**Professional learning in Year 1, 2 and 3 will increase Early Educators' instructional capacity through:**

- research-based early childhood teaching practices and materials that are aligned to Massachusetts Learning Standards and that epitomise best practices
- robust progress monitoring and early childhood assessments will provide information and data to identify students' strengths to ensure that students' additional needs and gaps are identified and mitigated
- strategies to facilitate:
  - small group instruction,
  - individualized instruction focused on language processing,
  - phonological awareness
  - phonemic awareness
  - visual processing
  - use of background knowledge to construct meaning in order to meet early reader's specific needs
  - provide specialized practices to improve outcomes for SWD
  - use of data and progress monitoring tools

**Other resources for implementation:**

- K-3 literacy intervention materials (needed Years 1-3)

### **Expanding PreK Programming**

Our strategy of expanding PreK opportunities is to support early learning and literacy development, particularly for our SWD and ELs. This increased programming will provide early cognitive advantages and a solid foundation for academic achievement.

In Year 1 (SY21), WPS will open one new preschool classroom at Chandler Magnet School to provide increased intervention support services. An additional preschool classroom to expand the district's commitment to dual language programming will also open at Chandler Magnet School. Due to the large number of EL students attending Woodland Academy, an additional English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher will be added. In addition to these targeted additions, the district will add multiple support positions district-wide to continue to address our commitment to early literacy. These positions include the following.

#### **In Year 1 (SY21):**

- 10 Literacy Tutors
- 21 Instructional Assistants and
- two Bilingual Literacy Specialists.

#### **In Year 2 (SY22):**

- two additional integrated Pre-K classrooms
- one elementary Dual Language classroom
- two additional Bilingual Literacy Specialists

#### **In Year 3 (SY23):**

- four additional Early Childhood classrooms

#### **Other resources for implementation:**

- PreK literacy materials (needed Year 1, 2, 3)

These programmatic and staffing additions will all contribute to a comprehensive, responsive system-wide teaching model that embeds inquiry, authentic learning, and discovery through a multi-pronged approach that centers on providing high quality, evidenced-based early childhood programming.

## **Evidence-based Program #2: Increase college and career attainment for students by expanding Early College and Innovation Pathways programs**

**Students Impacted:** The Worcester Public Schools plans to significantly expand Early College and Innovation Pathway programming over the next three years. A variety of direct instructional and support positions to expand programming will be added over the next three years. It is projected that In Year 1, 1,208 students will be impacted (SY 21), in Year 2, 2,318 students will be impacted (SY 22) and in Year 3, 3,363 students will be impacted (SY 23) directly by participation in either Early College or Innovation Pathways. Overall, approximately 7,200 WPS students in grades 9-12 will benefit from the expansion of college and career programming.

**Description of why and proposed plan:**The Worcester Public Schools (WPS) envisions expanding college and career programming at all high schools through expanding two of our programs: Early College and Innovation Pathways. This expansion is proposed to exponentially increase college and career attainment for underserved WPS students, specifically our SWD, ELs and Hispanic/Latino populations.

In order to implement our college and career programming as described below the following funding is needed.

### **Early College Program**

- **Year 1:**
  - Addition of Director of Early College Program position
  - Addition of 13 Guidance Counselors
- **Year 2:**
  - Addition of 6 Guidance Counselors
  - Funding for transportation of students to and from college campuses from their home high schools
- **Year 3:**
  - Addition of 6 Guidance Counselors
  - Funding for transportation of students to and from college campuses from their home high schools

### **Innovation Pathways Program**

- **Year 1**
  - Funding of Director of Innovation Pathways position
  - Inclusion of Pathway Instructor Stipends
  - Innovation Pathways Consumable Materials
- **Year 2**
  - Addition of College and Career Educator position (Internship/Capstone Projects)
  - Inclusion of Pathways Instructor Stipends
  - Innovation Pathways Consumable Materials

- Funding for transportation of students to and from Worcester Technical High School from home high schools
- **Year 3**
  - Inclusion of Pathways Instructor Stipends
  - Addition of Guidance Counselor position to support Innovation Pathways students
  - Innovation Pathways Consumable Materials
  - Funding for transportation of students to and from Worcester Technical High School from home high schools

### **Early College Worcester (ECW)**

WPS high school students participate in career academic planning courses. Over 650 WPS students have successfully completed dual enrollment courses and/or participated in a variety of post-secondary activities through ECW. These experiences have broadened students' understanding of what is expected in college and supported many students in becoming college bound. Through additional SOA funding, we will expand programming in multiple areas which will help continue to scale up and expand the capacity of our program.

Our proposed expansion will encompass the five guiding principles of the Early College initiative which include Equitable Access, Guided Academic Pathways, Enhanced Student Support, Connection to Career and Effective Partnerships.

#### *Guiding Principle 1: Equitable Access*

The ECW program will continue to use multiple recruitment approaches and outreach strategies to identify, encourage and recruit underserved students. Additional dedicated staff will allow for enhanced opportunities including:

- parent workshops and open houses
- curriculum alignment to help students receive needed skill development
- high school counseling meetings
- mentoring to encourage persistence
- college awareness programming and campus tours
- Improved online platform

#### *Guiding Principle 2: Guided Academic Pathways*

Though students currently participate in courses connected to academic pathways, they have exhibited challenges in selecting a desired pathway. In order to further support WPS students in exploring and identifying career pathways, SOA funding will provide opportunities for:

- specific career pathway exploration activities
- career counseling and advising
- targeted classes to provide guidance and support
- initial guidance to current ninth and tenth grade students in the district to provide early exposure and generate interest in enrolling into the ECW program



### *Guiding Principle 3: Enhanced Student Support*

Through this funding opportunity, we will enhance student supports designed to increase student enrollment capacity and student success rate in the program by providing the following:

- Wrap-around supports and academic opportunities will be increased and broadened through a new seven-part workshop series offered at the district's seven high schools and on the WSU and QCC campuses
- Family engagement will be strengthened through a caregiver track at orientation where parents and families can request and receive support on how to guide students after high school completion
- Increasing our current cadre of peer mentors from four to ten
- WSU and QCC faculty will identify and build more courses taught in multiple languages with high cultural relevance

### *Guiding Principle 4: Connection to Career*

This funding will allow us the opportunity to develop and operationalize an elementary education pathway. This will include coursework, faculty career counseling as well as exposure to MTEL preparation workshops and MTEL vouchers to practice taking the exam.

### *Guiding Principle 5: Effective Partnerships*

WSU and QCC faculty as well as WPS staff will collaborate to identify the content, concepts and skills needed to ensure that students succeed in college, especially in some of the most challenging courses for students including English, mathematics and biology. Workshops held by college and high school faculty will address academic preparation and the levels of mastery needed for required college courses. In addition, high school/college faculty will discuss curriculum similarities, differences, changes, and updates.

Our proposed plan reflects our work to identify students' most pressing needs and outlines service expansion that will meet them most effectively. Expanding upon the Early College Worcester program sends a clear message of our investment in our students and their future. The comprehensive nature of our expansion, building thoughtfully upon what already exists, will lead to the college and post-secondary success of all students, particularly SWD, ELs and Hispanic/Latino populations.

### **Innovation Pathways Programming (IPP)**

WPS will also expand the IPP program to increase access to career-focused programs for all students across the district, and in particular, SWD, ELs and Latino/Hispanic students. Our proposed expansion incorporates the same five guiding principles as the Early College program.

### *Guiding Principle 1: Equitable Access*

Students will begin to learn about the IPP in middle school and the majority of students will apply in the spring of 9th grade for participation to begin in 10th grade. Applications will also be accepted for students to begin the pathway in 11th grade for those that may have missed the

opportunity earlier or have evolved in their interest. Targeted recruitment efforts will encourage participation of SWD, ELs and Latino/Hispanic students.

*Principle 2: Guided Academic Pathways*

Our proposed expansion to include a Business and Finance sequence will provide both a broad introduction to the field of business and marketing while also preparing students to work toward industry-recognized credentials. In technical courses in the Business and Finance sequence, students receive a broad introduction to business, career interests and business applications in numerous career sectors. Students then focus on the marketing function across industries. This balance allows students to have a broad view of the industry while also gaining marketable skills within business and finance that prepare them to enter high-skill/high-demand careers across many sectors.

*Guiding Principle 3: Enhanced Student Support*

WPS recognizes there are a number of potential barriers to success for all students and these challenges are often greater for students from traditionally underrepresented groups. WPS is committed to providing ongoing academic and non-academic support to meet the following challenges:

- academic/homework
- scheduling the college level courses
- transportation
- external commitments
- language or SPED support
- attending after School

WPS will continue to ensure that all students have access to IPP and are provided support and accommodations as defined in their IEP or 504 plans.

The plan for support includes the following elements:

- The IEP Process will include discussion on the Innovation Pathways program.
- All technical course instructors are or will become SEI certified to address the needs of EL students
- Career and Academic Planning course is provided to Innovation Pathway students

*Guiding Principle 4: Connection to Career*

All high school students will receive college counseling and participate in college and career readiness courses. All counselors are educated in advising without bias. Students also are exposed to connection to career activities including:

- Learning Style Inventory
- Career Interest Profiler
- Career Cluster Finder
- Careers, Cluster and Pathways Exploration

Specific counseling and guidance will be done directly with trained guidance professionals in coordination with EL and SPED staff who best understand the expectations for these identified students.

*Guiding Principle 5: Effective Partnerships*

Fundamentally, an Innovation Pathway program can only be effective and sustainable if supported by a fully integrated partnership between the high schools, district, and Technical high school. The WPS IPP program is an extended day model, therefore additional faculty and administrative expenses are incurred beyond the WPS operating budget. Additional funding is required to cover the cost of transportation, industry-recognized certifications and support of students in internships.

These programmatic and staffing additions will increase college and career attainment for all students, particularly SWD, ELs and Hispanic/Latino populations. Exposure to college and career opportunities coupled with evidence-based support strategies will serve to promote post-secondary success for all students.

**Evidence-based Program #3: Improve the learning experiences of students by deepening attention to issues of diversity, inclusion and equity through diversifying the workforce and deepening staff's understanding of culturally responsive practices.**

**Students Impacted:** The Worcester Public Schools plans to significantly expand Early College and Innovation Pathway programming over the next three years. A variety of direct instructional and support positions to expand programming will be added over the next three years. It is projected that In Year 1, 1,208 students will be impacted (SY 21), in Year 2, 2,318 students will be impacted (SY 22) and in Year 3, 3,363 students will be impacted (SY 23) directly by participation in either Early College or Innovation Pathways. Overall, approximately 7,200 WPS students in grades 9-12 will benefit from the expansion of college and career programming.

As issues of diversity and cultural proficiency affect us all, the entire WPS student population (25,044) will be impacted by these initiatives. Students from diverse backgrounds or those otherwise underrepresented will especially benefit from these efforts.

**Description of why and proposed plan:** The Worcester Public Schools (WPS) is committed to meeting the needs of all students by diversifying our workforce and leadership while deepening attention and support for culturally responsive practices. WPS will diversify our teaching ranks and leadership team through "grow your own" pipeline programs aimed at identifying and recruiting current WPS employees from diverse backgrounds. WPS will also leverage a Chief Diversity Officer position to raise issues of equity and diversity across all levels of the district. All WPS teaching staff and leadership will receive ongoing training and support in culturally responsive pedagogy. As the WPS student body continues to become more diverse, it is imperative that our staff is reflective of our student body, all staff are culturally competent and that issues of equity are at the forefront of all decision making.

### **Diversifying the Workforce**

WPS began an initiative in 2019 to provide the necessary coursework and other certifications for current WPS paraprofessionals to obtain MA DESE teaching licensure. WPS intends to expand and enhance this program in subsequent years through SOA funding. Specifically, we will engage in the following over the next three years:

- recruit and support a cohort of 20 diverse paraprofessionals who lack Bachelor's degrees each of the next three years and provide them the necessary support to obtain degrees and licensure
- recruit and support a cohort of 12 diverse paraprofessionals who possess Bachelor's degrees but lack teaching credentials and provide them the necessary support to obtain licensure
- recruit and support 20 diverse teachers who show interest and potential in administrative roles and provide them the necessary support to obtain administrative licensure

### **Chief Diversity Officer**

The Chief Diversity Officer (CDO) is a member of the district's leadership team. The CDO leads all district efforts to increase diversity, inclusion and equity across all aspects of the WPS. This person will:

- represent the district at recruiting events with managers and department heads
- serve as a clearing house to link qualified candidates with hiring managers
- assess the district's needs and the competitive market place for the purpose of preparing and implementing a staffing plan
- serve as the district's administrator for compliance with state and federal laws pertaining to equity, discrimination and harassment including but not limited to Title IX, and mandates from the Department of Justice
- manages the district's initiatives for Equitable Teacher Access including programs to diversify the teacher applicant pool (i.e., Worcester Future Teachers and the IA to Teacher Pipeline, etc.)
- plan and coordinate orientation and onboarding programs for new employees

The creation of and support of the CDO position will elevate the district's efforts to increase diversity, inclusion and equity across all aspects of the WPS. These efforts will directly benefit all students, particularly underrepresented populations such as SWD, ELs and Latino/Hispanic students.

### **Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP)**

All WPS teaching staff and leadership will receive ongoing training and support in CRP. CRP is a framework that systematically addresses persistent gaps in educational experiences of students from historically marginalized communities. There are three main components: high levels of academic achievement, cultural competence and critical consciousness. Staff will deepen attention and support for CRP through a variety of topics, including but not limited to:

- Exploring their assumptions, understanding and support for culturally responsive and learner centered practices
- Uncovering curriculum, instruction and assessment indicators and look-fors related to learner-centered and culturally responsive practices that promote rigor and student engagement
- Considering ways of growing attention to culturally responsive practices across WPS

**Evidence-based Program #4: Increasing students' pro-social behavior and decision-making skills by increasing personnel and expanding and strengthening SEL instruction**

**Students Impacted:** The Worcester Public Schools plans to increase personnel and expand and strengthen SEL instruction over the next three years. Additional professional development offerings and direct instructional and support positions will be added over the next three years. Overall, approximately 25,044 students, specifically our SWD, ELs, and Latino population will benefit from enhanced SEL instruction.

**Description of why and proposed plan:** Expanding and enhancing SEL programming will benefit learners and support educators to create a district-wide, coherent and comprehensive SEL framework to ensure that all students' possess social-emotional competencies. The WPS aims to expand research-based social-emotional programming in order to meet multiple needs: ensure all students can manage emotions, set goals, establish positive relationships and make responsible decisions. While all students deserve and require support in these areas, students from historically marginalized groups are often most in need of these supports.

The WPS will expand upon current efforts to build the SEL knowledge and instructional capacity of all educators throughout the system. WPS intends to shift our model of delivery from one that is primarily reactive to dysregulated individual students to one that is based on a universal, tier 1 approach of providing all students with SEL skills and strategies. In addition to better supporting all students' needs, this approach will allow clinical staff to better target support to those students most in need.

**Professional learning in Year 1, 2 and 3 will increase educators' SEL knowledge relative to:**

- Understanding and implementing trauma-informed practice to increase student resilience
- Tier 1 SEL practices across all classrooms and schools
- Research-based practices for creating and maintaining positive relationships with students and problem-solving
- Mental health and clinical support
- ABA based supports
- social skills
- anger management
- executive functioning

- dialectical behavior therapy including:
  - validation strategies
  - mindfulness
  - distress
  - tolerance
  - emotion
  - regulation
  - interpersonal effectiveness

**Additional personnel in Year 1, 2 and 3 will improve WPS capacity to implement SEL for all students:**

**Year 1:**

- 3 school psychologists
- 6 school adjustment counselors
- 4 behavioral health specialists
- 1 health/safety teacher
- 1 safety center teacher
- 2 special ed. Behavioral specialists
- 1 BCBA, stabilization team
- 1 nurse, stabilization team

**Year 2:**

- 3 school psychologists
- 3 school adjustment counselors
- 3 behavioral health specialists
- 4 health/safety teacher
- 3 Wrap-around coordinators
- 1 safety center teacher
- 4 special ed. Behavioral specialists
- 2 BCBA, stabilization team
- 1 nurse, stabilization team

**Year 3:**

- 2 school psychologists
- 3 school adjustment counselors
- 3 behavioral health specialists
- 4 health/safety teacher
- 3 Wraparound coordinators
- 3 special ed. behavioral specialists
- 1 BCBA, stabilization team
- 1 nurse, stabilization team

**Other resources for implementation:**

- Prek-12 SEL classroom materials (needed in years 1,2, 3)
- PreK-12 Tier 2 and 3 SEL resources (needed in years 1, 2, 3)

These programmatic and staffing additions will increase SEL competencies for all students. Increased universal SEL evidence-based practices coupled with increased SEL instructional capacity will ensure all students can manage emotions, set goals, establish positive relationships and make responsible decisions.

**Commitment 3: Monitoring Success with Outcome Metrics and Targets**

**What metrics will your district use to monitor success in reducing disparities in achievement among student subgroups? Select from the list of DESE metrics or provide your own.**

<p><b>1) DESE outcome metrics:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Student Attendance</li><li>● Student Discipline</li><li>● Graduation and Outcomes</li><li>● ELA MCAS results</li><li>● Early College Enrollment</li><li>● Innovation Pathways Enrollment</li><li>● College Matriculation</li><li>● College Persistence</li><li>● Staff Demographics</li><li>● Staff Retention</li><li>● ACCESS results</li></ul>	<p><b>2) Custom district metrics:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Demographics of pre-kindergarten and kindergarten Enrollment</li><li>● Benchmark Assessment</li><li>● STAR Reading Assessment</li><li>● Grade 3 ELA MCAS scores</li><li>● Teaching Strategies Gold Assessment</li><li>● Panorama SEL survey</li><li>● End of year staff survey</li><li>● Attendance at WPS community meetings and workshops</li><li>● Demographics and Diversity of new hires</li></ul>
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**Commitment 4: Engaging All Families**

**How will your district ensure that all families, particularly those representing the student subgroups most in need of support, have the opportunity to meaningfully engage with the district regarding their students' needs?**

Meaningful engagement with families and other community members is a priority of the district. Outreach efforts are conducted at the classroom, school and system-wide level. Specific efforts are made to ensure that all families are meaningfully engaged in their children's education. Toward this end, specific emphasis is given to families for whom English is not their first language and those whose children have unique learning needs and challenges. Additionally,

WPS values the cultural diversity of our city and works to engage various ethnic and cultural groups. Specific efforts to engage families include:

- Safe and Welcoming School committees at every WPS school
- school-based events
  - math and literacy nights
  - technology nights
  - plays/performances
  - family fun nights
  - multi-cultural events
  - school site council meetings
  - PTO meetings/events
- system-wide parent advisory committees
  - city-wide Parent Advisory Council
  - city-wide English Language Parent Advisory Council
  - city-wide Special Education Parent Advisory Council
- Superintendent's Student Advisory Council
- Head Start family engagement efforts
- partnerships with community agencies
- school and district parenting workshops
- playgroups
- collaboration with local faith-based organizations
- Special education clinic meetings
- technology
  - ADA compliant website
  - mass notification system
  - language lines
  - multiple social media platforms
  - video conferencing tools
  - email

#### **Family and community input regarding SOA**

We have further engaged families, students and the greater community in regard to spending priorities for new funds available through the Student Opportunity Act. Specifically, the School Committee and the Administration, in collaboration with our local employee union, the Education Association of Worcester (EAW), and the Worcester Education Collaborative (WEC), has held open community forums throughout the city. A total of four forums were held in February and March, one in each of the four quadrants of the city. Each forum was open to the public. Interpreters for seven languages were present at each forum to support full participation for non-English speaking individuals.

Each forum began with a brief presentation to provide background on the Student Opportunity Act and our current budget situation by the superintendent and school business manager. Tables of participants engaged in facilitated discussions to capture individual and group input.



Each table reported out to the group, and each individual provided feedback regarding spending preferences. Each forum attracted between 40 and 70 community members. Overall, the top preferences for funding of those at the forums were: 1) increased support for students' social-emotional needs, 2) diversifying the teacher and administrator workforce 3) expanded pre-school and early literacy programs 4) hiring additional personnel to improve student performance.

A number of other information gathering events were also held throughout the city and input from these events was considered as well. Among others, the Worcester Education Collaborative, the Latino Education Institute, the Worcester Education Equity Coalition and the Worcester Education Justice Alliance provided input. These groups provided the district with a summary of their findings. The consistent themes they pointed to included: increased social-emotional support for students, increased cultural competence of staff coupled with increases in staff diversity, additional college and career readiness support, expanded early education programs and relevant curriculum tied to real-life learning opportunities.

Each principal in the Worcester Public Schools engaged their school council members in an activity to determine spending priorities as well. School councils identified increased social-emotional support as their top priority with over 85% of schools ranking this as one of their top three priorities. School councils identified the hiring of additional personnel to support student learning as their second choice and additional opportunities for teachers to collaborate as their third overall choice.

We also conducted an electronic survey of all Worcester Public School students to gain their perspective on spending priorities. We collected approximately 10,000 student responses. For high school students, the top priority was an increase in pathway courses such as early college to help students better prepare for their future. High school students' second choice was increased social-emotional support while their third choice was increased technology and classroom materials and their fourth choice was more time for collaboration between teachers. Elementary and middle school students selected more time for teacher collaboration as their top priority while selecting new technology and classroom materials second, increased social-emotional support and extended day or extended year opportunities fourth.

We are confident that our plan for use of additional Student Opportunity Funds and that our more general district priorities have encapsulated the variety of feedback and input we have received from families and other stakeholders. We will continue to engage in open and continuous dialogue with families and others as we move forward.

**Student Opportunity Plans - Worcester Public Schools Budget**

**Diversifying our Workforce**

Key Activity/Expenditure Description	Ongoing Expense?	Year 1 (FY21)	
	(Yes/No)	FTE	Budget Amount*
Chief Diversity Officer	Yes	1.0	\$164,987
LCI (Diversity)	Yes		\$70,000
Diverse Paraprofessional Pipeline Cohorts	Yes		\$28,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>\$262,987</b>

**Early College and Innovation Pathways**

Key Activity/Expenditure Description	Ongoing Expense?	Year 1 (FY21)	
	(Yes/No)	FTE	Budget Amount*
Guidance CounselorS	Yes	13.0	\$1,126,203
Director of Early College	Yes	1.0	\$136,244
Director Innovation Pathway	Yes	1.0	\$136,244
Innovation Pathway Stipends	Yes	0.0	\$19,739
Innovation Pathway Materials	Yes	0.0	\$17,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>15.0</b>	<b>\$1,418,430</b>

**Preschool & Early Literacy Programs**

Key Activity/Expenditure Description	Ongoing Expense?	Year 1 (FY21)	
	(Yes/No)	FTE	Budget Amount*
PK-3 Literacy Professional Development	Yes		\$287,225
Instructional Assistants-Early Literacy	Yes	21.0	\$809,949
Instructional Assistants - Preschool	Yes	18.0	\$694,242
Bilinugal Intervention - Dual Language	Yes	2.0	\$173,262
Literacy Tutor	Yes	10.0	\$157,080
Literacy Consumables	Yes		\$89,337
English Learner Teachers	Yes	1.0	\$86,631
Preschool Teacher - Dual Language	Yes	1.0	\$86,631
Preschool Teacher - Special Education	Yes	1.0	\$86,631
Instructional Assistants - English Language	Yes	1.0	\$38,569
Preschool Instructional Asst - Dual Language	Yes	1.0	\$38,569
Preschool Instructional Asst - Special Education	Yes	1.0	\$38,569
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>57.0</b>	<b>\$2,586,695</b>

**Social Emotional Learning**

Key Activity/Expenditure Description	Ongoing Expense?	Year 1 (FY21)	
	(Yes/No)	FTE	Budget Amount*
School Adjustment Counselors	Yes	5.0	\$ 433,155
Behaviorial Health Specialists	Yes	4.0	\$ 346,524
Psychologists	Yes	2.0	\$ 173,262
Special Education Behavior Specialist	Yes	2.0	\$ 173,262
Health & Safety Teachers	Yes	1.0	\$ 86,631
BCBA	Yes	1.0	\$ 86,631
Health & Safety Teachers	Yes	1.0	\$ 86,631
School Adjustment Counselors	Yes	1.0	\$ 86,631
Psychologist	Yes	1.0	\$ 86,631
School Nurse	Yes	1.0	\$ 68,675
Social Emotional PD/Trainings	Yes		\$ 62,725
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19.0</b>	<b>\$ 1,690,758</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>92.0</b>	<b>\$ 5,958,870</b>

\*ALL PERSONNEL POSITIONS INCLUDE SALARY & BENEFITS